



Spring 2025

Elisha: Seeing the Hand of God at Work

Sermon Title: Follow Me

To be used with Session 1: God's Hand in Calling Us to Serve

The Point: God invites us to join Him in His work.

Scripture: Matthew 4:18-25

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible study "God's Hand in Calling Us to Serve," this sermon focuses on the calling of the first disciples as Jesus said, "Follow Me." This simple call to follow is also a call to serve, as following Christ entails both serving Him and serving others. There is no following without serving. This call to service is not just for those who would lead, or those whose lives seem extraordinary to us; it is for each believer who would serve Christ where they are with the gifts and talents they have been given. As we examine the call of the first disciples, we can also embrace the call to follow and serve that God has for us.

Introduction: The first disciples were fishermen, and this is one reason Jesus used fishing analogies when teaching them, telling them they must become "fishers of men." The idea that we also are called to "fish" for people is striking in that it requires action. We can discuss where to fish for people, what types of people we can catch, what lures are the most effective, and why fishing is so important. But if we merely talk about it and never walk out the door and actually do it, we have failed at our primary task. We can be very good at talking about service, but not serving. We can talk about evangelism without evangelizing. We can talk about leadership without leading. Jesus calls us to serve others and to meet their needs in His name and through His strength. Through our service to Him, our desire to truly follow Him, we will see souls turn to Him and experience the joy of His salvation.

1. We are called to follow Him (Matt. 4:18-22).

This passage gives the account of four men whose lives would be forever changed by two words: follow me. It is not unlikely that this day started off just like any other day. These two sets of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John, went to work catching fish as usual, as it was their livelihood. Yet this day did not end like any other day. This day ended with them leaving their nets and following Jesus. It is certainly no stretch to say that their lives, and the world itself, would not be the same because of it. It was rather unceremonious; Jesus called to them in the middle of their ordinary everyday lives to follow Him. He gave no further instructions. Yet they followed willingly and without question.

Lifeway

Jesus calls out to us in the same way. We are called to follow Him in the ordinary, everyday moments of our lives wherever He may lead us. Just as these men immediately left what they were doing to follow, so we must be prepared to alter our plans, change our direction, and be ready to heed the call to serve and follow Jesus into any work He has for us to do.

2. We are called to serve others (Matt. 4:23-24).

One cannot separate the teaching ministry of Jesus from His healing ministry. Wherever Jesus went, crowds followed Him to hear what He had to say, but also for the chance of being healed. He did not begrudge this but went to work serving and healing them.

There is no doubt that Jesus still heals today. There are countless stories of those who are sick being prayed over and seeing their illness healed. Miraculous healing is not guaranteed to those who follow Jesus, but the miraculous is well within the realm of possibility as our Savior brings healing in many ways. Jesus alone can heal hearts and souls. Jesus alone can take a ruined life and restore it to its fullest. By the grace of God, we are His instruments to accomplish this service of others. As we serve others, we can feed the hungry, provide rest for the weary, and give comfort and peace to the downtrodden. We are called to serve those in need, and to serve one another faithfully and without complaining. In Christ, our service will make the presence of God evident to others and to ourselves as well.

3. We are called serve all people (Matt. 4:25).

In this verse we learn that Jesus is attracting followers from all over that part of the world. People from every background were coming to see what this Jesus is all about, what these miracles were about, and what it could mean for them. Galilee and Jerusalem were very different places, with different types of people. The Decapolis was notably not a part of the land of Israel, and although there was a Jewish presence, these were not by any means Jewish cities. Yet they were all flocking to this Jewish Messiah.

Early on, Jesus made it clear that while His ministry was a fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures, he was offering salvation to people outside of Judaism. He was the Savior for all peoples, everywhere, and He made this evident by serving people across all kinds of boundaries. His service to these people resonates even today, as we serve those who are similar to us and those who are not. When we step out of what is comfortable in the name of Jesus, we follow in His footsteps of service.

Conclusion: Our faith in Christ should spur us not only to words, but to action. Just as Jesus called His disciples, the call to follow Him still rings loudly today. As He called to them, they were required to leave their boats and go where He would lead. There was no option but to go. We too are called to follow Him in His work, to live out our faith daily, and to share with the world the glorious truth of our Savior. We see needs all around us, and God has called and equipped us to uniquely serve those needs. It is a privilege and a blessing to follow Jesus wherever He will lead and serve others joyfully as we follow Him.

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